

I Love You, Always by prettyboiiharrington

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Summary:

Billy has killed, has stared death in the face, has looked some of the most deadly men in the face and laughed just before cuffing them and throwing them in the back of his cruiser, but until the infamous Harrington, he never had to confront love.

I Love You, Always

The first time Billy says 'I love you' it catches everyone by surprise.

It's so random and almost ridiculous that Steve almost laughs in his face and tells him to fuck off before he realizes the weight of Billy's words.

Billy has felt it for a long time, feels a need for Steve thrumming in his veins, feels a buzzing in every molecule of his being when he hears his voice, feels like Steve's touch is the only thing that keeps his heart beating.

Billy doesn't actually say it when he should.

He doesn't say it when Steve holds him on the nights he can't sleep because his past had come rearing its ugly head, haunting him, fear lingering in his bones like acid.

He doesn't say it when Steve comes and unties his aching limbs, burning and bleeding from ropes tied too tight, jaw broken because he had refused to die quietly.

He doesn't say it when Steve completely cancels everything he has to do for the day because Billy woke up shaking and sick, and Steve wants to take care of him.

"Steve, you don't have to do this. I always take care of myself, it's fine. I'll live."

"I know I don't have to, but why should you have to take care of yourself when you have someone to do it for you now? Let me do this, I want to, I like looking after you baby."

Billy definitely doesn't cry, and even if he does, it is most definitely because his stomach is convulsing, and he's been vomiting all day and not because he hasn't ever been held in someone's arms with such care, hasn't had someone care enough to even check on him let alone run a cold washcloth over his forehead and kiss his clammy skin with tender lips.

He doesn't say it the first time sex with Steve goes from desperate

fucking to making love, despite the fact that he later admits to Steve that when he came he assumed that was what meeting God felt like.

He doesn't say it when he's nearly forced to kill Steve, gun held to his head, forcing down his tears and tasting blood because he's bitten his bottom lip a little too hard. When it's over, he shows him he loves him, desperately kissing him, the two of them ending up on the cold and dirty warehouse floor, Billy inhaling Steve like he's air and he had been drowning.

If you ask him, he'd say he had been. Billy needs Steve in order to live.

"I'll kill anyone before I ever let someone take you from me."

"Anyone? There's no one you would save before me?"

"Not even myself."

It 's moments like this where Billy does other things, important moments that translate to 'I love you' that make it easy for Steve to keep saying it without Billy saying it back. That doesn't mean Steve doesn't ever want to hear it, it just means he'll wait, forever if he has to.

Billy doesn't say it for ten long months. At one point he tries to, tries to force it out until he feels like he's choking; Steve deserves to hear it, and it isn't like he doesn't feel the same so why the fuck can't he get it out.

"Baby, it's okay, you don't have to. Calm down, it's alright, we're alright, just breathe for me, okay? Breathe."

Billy holds onto him, entire body trembling. He's so fucking angry with himself. "Why can't I do this one fucking thing for you? Why am I so fucking broken?!"

"Hey, you're not broken, don't say shit like that. Whatever is holding you back, it's fine. It's not exactly like your life has been a fucking cake walk, shit takes time. You'll get their eventually. You don't have to say it for me to know, okay? I know."

Billy must apologize twenty times before he finally calms down, because 'I'm sorry' used to be just as hard to say, but he'd stopped choking on those words a few years back and at least he can give that to his lover for the time being.

There are so many times where Billy should say it, but he can't, but the first time he does, it's so stupid — well, that's what Billy will say. Billy thinks he should have held out, found a more serious or romantic moment, but Steve will say it was perfect and Billy isn't allowed to take it back.

Billy's sitting on the counter eating something that has to be 90% whipped cream as Steve works on something for dinner. Billy thinks he looks so cute, button up shirt undone a little with the sleeves rolled up, slacks still on but his belt and shoes abandoned on the table by the couch, dish towel thrown over his shoulder.

Steve has been picking on him since he'd gotten home a few hours before. Billy's still flushed and a little out of breath from Steve torturing him a few minutes before — he was tickling him, Billy is just an over-dramatic bitch.

Billy sits there, waiting for the perfect moment to get his revenge. Once everything is in the oven, all the spices and extra meat and veggies put away, and all the knives in the dishwasher or their respective blocks, Billy tries to think of something to do, to savor his moment.

Steve moves to stand between Billy's legs, but before he can Billy throws whipped cream at Steve, most of it landing on his neck and shirt.

Billy cracks up at the horrified look on Steve's face. Steve tries to glare, but Billy's laugh is the most beautiful song in Steve's eyes, so it's pretty damn hard to stay mad.

"Baby, you gotta stop making a mess of all my clothes before I start punishing you," Steve scolds, but Billy's beaming, smile bright. Steve feels honored whenever he's given one of those smiles, genuine and warm; he knows just how hard it is, or at least how hard it used to be, to get anything but a cynical smile to find its way to those perfect lips.

"Steve, you literally have blood on your pants, and it's one of the like three nice things I've bought for you, so you're one to talk," Billy rolls his

eyes but there's fondness, the smile never leaving his face.

"That's different. My mistake is from work, yours is just because you decided you wanted to be naughty."

*"I thought you liked me naughty **daddy**," Billy purrs, biting down on his lip.*

It was Steve's turn to roll his eyes then, but he moves closer to Billy, finally finding his place between his legs, pressing their foreheads together.

"I like you no matter what, so that's not a good excuse for you to be a fucking brat," Steve teases, placing a gentle kiss to Billy's now pouting lips.

"Well I'm hungry and you're taking too long to cook. This gave me a good reason to lick it off you, have myself a little snack," Billy tells him, a proud grin replacing his extremely short-lived pout.

"God, you're fucking annoying," the words hold no malice, in fact each word is laced with a tone so sickeningly sweet that Billy will later claim it gave him cavities.

"Yeah, I love you too," the words tumble off Billy's lips before he can even notice, his smile never faltering.

It's as if time freezes, Steve moments away from making another smart-ass comment but stopping himself when they realize what Billy has just said, both of their eyes going wide.

Steve pauses. His hands have found their way to Billy's hips and he squeezes them for reassurance while he searched Billy's eyes for any sign of fear or regret. Billy worries his lip between his teeth, but he has no intention of taking those words back, and when they notice they both let out a breath neither of them realized they were holding.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, always."